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Zimbabwe | Smallholder Technology
& Access to Markets Program (STAMP)

SNAPSHOT

Rural Farmers Ready to Export

With technical support and access to the export market, smallholder flower farmers stand to dramatically increase incomes.



Photo by Fintrac Inc.

Daniel Machibiza is learning good agricultural practices from USAID-STAMP. With a healthy protea crop, he stands to earn thousands of dollars on the export market.

“I am happy to be part of this project and I can’t wait to start harvesting these proteas. School fees will never be a bother.”

Daniel Machibiza

Telling Our Story

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USAID’s Smallholder Technology and Access to Markets Program (STAMP) has been working with 20 communal farmers in rural villages in the Nyanga district for the past eight months, helping them establish small plots of protea flowers.

These farmers had been growing maize or small vegetable crops for home consumption, not realizing their family farms could become commercially viable with the introduction of a high-value cash crop.

The farmers plan to export their flowers with help from ZimFlora, a flower marketing company and USAID-STAMP partner. Through the partnership, the farmers receive inputs from ZimFlora, including seedlings and fertilizer, and technical assistance in planting and harvesting.

With support from USAID-STAMP, the farmers learned to prepare their fields using good agricultural practices such as mulching and composting. These practices not only improve their protea crop, but also increase yields of their maize crops, improving household food security.

The crop is still growing, with harvesting expected early next year. The farmers are enthusiastic about their potential income from the lucrative flower export markets. They are also growing sugar beans as a filler crop to be harvested before the proteas, providing an additional source of income.

“I am happy to be a part of this project. I can’t wait to start harvesting these proteas,” said farmer Daniel Machibiza. “School fees will never be a bother again.”

The farmers expect to pick around 7,000 stems during their first harvest, a number that is expected to jump to 24,500 stems by the second year as bush sizes increase. Protea stems fetch an average of \$0.12 each on the international market. These previously subsistence-level farmers stand to earn nearly \$3,000 from the flowers when they are in full production.

Costs incurred during the first year of production are \$805 for 0.1 hectare, of which \$700 is the cost of the plants themselves. Most of the upfront costs will be covered in the first harvest as proteas stay in the ground for at least eight years. Annual costs will be approximately \$200-300.

Because proteas are a perennial crop, the farmers now have a sustainable and profitable relationship with ZimFlora, which will last long after USAID-STAMP ends.